

DATE 2-4-09HB Room 457Sec. Donna
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FACSIMILE TRANSMITTAL REPORT

FROM:

DEPARTMENT OF SOCIAL WORK

THE UNIVERSITY OF MONTANA

MISSOULA, MT 59812

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DATE:

February 4, 2009

TO:

Health and Human Services Joint Appropriations Subcommittee

AGENCY:

Senate

FAX #:

444-4075

FROM:

Ryan Tolleson Kuce

PHONE NUMBER:

243-4228

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COMMENTS:



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February 3, 2009

Madam Chairwoman and Members of the Health and Human Services Joint
Appropriations Subcommittee:

My name is Ryan Tolleson Knee and I am the Chair of the School of Social Work at The University of Montana. I write in support of the budget that was proposed yesterday by the Child and Family Service Division Administrator, Shirley Brown.

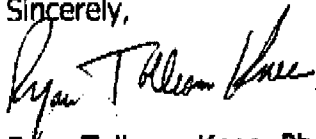
The responsibilities undertaken by social workers are difficult and frequently misunderstood. The complexity of these cases and the misperception of the work involved could not be more apparent in the field of child protection services. During the last nine years, The University of Montana School of Social Work has worked in partnership with the Division to provide them with well-trained graduates who are able to successfully execute the responsibilities of child protection specialists. During the last two years, this partnership has grown significantly with help from federal Title IV-e funding to allow the School to redesign the current two week pre-employment training curriculum by expanding it from two to six weeks and by including transfer of learning weeks between each of the six weeks. Furthermore, with the federal IV-e funds, the School has hired four additional employees to function as staff development specialists for the Division in Billings, Great Falls, Helena, and Missoula to provide initial and ongoing training, coaching, and mentoring to newly hired child protection specialists to ensure that what they learn during the classroom training is successfully transferred into the field.

Judging by the success of similar training programs in other states, Montana's new child protection training partnership should result in a better skilled and more knowledgeable workforce that has the tools needed to better execute their responsibilities. Other states have also indicated that they are able to retain their employees for longer periods of time.

The partnership between The University of Montana School of Social Work and the Child and Family Services Division has been very successful and will result in improved

outcomes for Montana's children and families. If I can be of further assistance, do not hesitate to contact me.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Ryan Tolleson Knee". The signature is fluid and cursive, with the first name "Ryan" being more prominent.

Ryan Tolleson Knee, Ph.D.

Chair, UM School of Social Work